

AOML AND RSMAS MEMBERS RECEIVE TAKEDA TECHNO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD FINALIST COMMENDATION

By Shailer Cummings

Dr. Kelly Goodwin, a microbiologist with AOML's Ocean Chemistry Division, received a finalist commendation plaque applauding her participation in the 2001 Takeda Foundation funding competition. The Takeda Foundation (www.takeda-foundation.jp) annually funds several categories of research and entrepreneurship. She and co-PI's Dr. Peter Ortner (AOML) and Dr. Jack Fell (RSMAS) competed in the "Novel Technologies for Chemical Measurement used for Environmental Monitoring" category. The proposal was entitled "Molecular based in-situ, remote sensor for detecting microbial contaminants." Ideas in the proposal included using DNA probes that "stick" only to unique zones along the DNA strand in order to identify microbes in environmental samples. The sensor would extract the DNA remotely, and the DNA-specific probe would have a highly fluorescent tail facilitating easy and rapid detection.

In early October 2001, Kelly submitted her proposal electronically, along with a hundred other hopefuls from Japan, Canada, and the United States. This was a unique competition process. It was conducted entirely over the Internet, except for telephone interviews of the five finalists. Several volleys of questions and answers between the authors and the Selection Committee narrowed the field to 16 proposals. During late October and early November 2001, the remaining competitors were encouraged to ask questions of others in the group of 16. This was conducted as a cyber-forum over the Internet. Each participant was evaluated based on both the questions they asked others and the responses they gave to questions received from others about their projects. It got exciting!

Challenges skyrocketed when Dr. Goodwin left for Australia to participate in a seven-week cruise to Antarctica in late October 2001. Kelly met the cyber challenge and continued to stay on top of the questions via email and with her ground support crew consisting of husband Rob Johnson and AOML allies. By the end of the second week in November, Kelly advanced to the final round and was selected as one of five finalists. The most challenging event came as Kelly gave a satellite-linked PowerPoint presentation and answered questions for the Final Selection Committee located in Japan while she was at 60°S on the R.V. Aurora Australis. Although Kelly was not the final award recipient, she showed us all what is possible using today's technology, and we are very proud of her. When Kelly returns in January ask her about the experience and take time to wish her award-winning success with her next proposal.